

The Semaphore

A Publication of the TELEGRAPH HILL DWELLERS



Port City
see page 20

Issue 193

Winter 2011



THE SEMAPHORE # 193 Winter 2011

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PRESIDENT'S CORNER

By Vedica Puri

This is my last column as your president. (No really, I promise).

I continue to be in awe of the raw energy, spirit and dedication of our members. I owe a major debt of gratitude to my fellow board members, who quietly shoulder much responsibility and give up so much of their free time to make our neighborhood the awesome place that it is. So, thank you all for the privilege you bestowed on me by allowing me to be your president. I can only hope I have honored the presidents that have served before me and the members who make the THD what it is.

Now a story. It's dated, but it has never been told in public. It's a story that explains why I personally believe, unwaveringly, in THD, its process, its board and, most importantly, in its members and the principles for which they stand.

It was early 2010. Our law offices were in the

middle of renegotiating lease space in the Transamerica pyramid when my senior partner asked me one day last March, "Are your hill people opposing some kind of building next door to the Pyramid?" I said, "You mean 555 Washington, the one where the developer is proposing to double the existing height limit? Hell yes." I explained the THD had been tracking the project for two years and little, if any, changes had been made to the planned design. What I did not know then was the owner of the Pyramid was one and the same as the owner of 555 Washington. That owner is the all-mighty Aegon Corp., which touts itself as the world's largest insurance company.

My firm was suddenly told that Aegon had

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decided that, *as a result of my involvement with 555 Washington*, they would not to renew my law firm's lease space in the Pyramid. A simple case of confusion by Aegon over my role as THD president versus my role as law firm partner? I thought not. My law partners stood firm that no bully, no matter how rich a company, should be able to economically pressure a tenant. To me, this was nothing short of an attempt by a multibillion-dollar company to choke off any opposition by threatening me/my firm.

There were many, many ways the THD could have handled the situation. The media. Rumors. High-handed meetings. We did none of that. Instead, we trusted in the process. I confided what was going on to the board. The THD's comment letter on the 555 Washington draft EIR had already been submitted months before this episode. We would wait until the final EIR to ensure it dealt with our concerns. If not, we would appeal it to the Board of Supervisors, like any other utterly deficient EIR.

Meanwhile, the real-estate brokers for my law firm and Aegon continued to talk and try to negotiate a lease arrangement. My law partners tracked the public hearings on 555 Washington with obvious

interest in tandem with the lease talks. Then came the infamous letter from Aegon threatening to pull the plug on the project, if the Board of Supervisors did not reject the EIR appeal. The day of the EIR hearing was full of drama. Aegon refused to back off its threat to shut down the project. In the middle of the hearing, Aegon said it could build the tower at half the proposed height. Not even the more conservative supervisors were buying it. It was too little, too late. After an exhaustive review of deficiencies, even Supervisor Sean Elsbernd, not known for his fondness of preservation groups, had one of the best lines of the day. He said Aegon's threats were the equivalent of holding a metaphorical "gun" to the board's head.

The 10-to-0 board vote to reject that EIR was downright vindicating. The process had worked. A few months later, my law firm reached agreement with Aegon on our tenancy and we maintain our space in the Pyramid. The lease will be up in a few years, however, and while Aegon may come and go as a property owner, I take heart in knowing the THD will be here, ever vigilant and ever welcoming. ✕

EDITOR'S NOTE

The Spring issue of *The Semaphore* will employ a one-time experimental change. We will be trying out a tabloid format, mailing it to our members, but distributing it to households throughout the neighborhood as a way of letting folks know about the valuable work THD is doing in the community and how much fun it is to read *The Semaphore*.





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THE UNSEEN HAND OF CHANGE— ELLIS ACT EVICTIONS IN NORTH BEACH

By Nancy Shanahan

Outwardly, the buildings of North Beach and Telegraph Hill appear much the same as they have for the last 100 years. But what is not obvious is the unabated epidemic of evictions that are changing the soul and character of our community.

Unless you personally know people who have been evicted, or happen to see the occasional protest banner hanging out of building windows, you are unlikely to know the extent of these evictions and their impact on our neighborhood. In the latest case, happening at 525 Greenwich St., six residential units are on the chopping block. Seniors, who have each lived in their apartments for more than 10 years, occupy four of these units. Unlike many who go away quietly, these tenants are fighting to keep their homes.

Sandi Bishop, a well-known local artist who lives on Social Security and a small pension, is one of the senior tenants being evicted by the new owner of their building, S.F. Affordable Housing, LLC, which plans to sell the apartments one by one as tenancy-in-common units (TICs) in the \$400,000-to-\$600,000 range. Bishop and her fellow tenants have organized two protests at 525 Greenwich St., attended by dozens of neighbors, as well as District 3 Supervisor David Chiu. Signs in the windows of 525 Greenwich now read “Ellis Act Eviction in Progress” and “SOS Seniors Need Affordable Housing in San Francisco.” “Something is wrong with speculating and buying and taking away people’s homes, especially seniors,” Bishop was recently quoted in an

article in the local edition of the New York Times.

The Ellis Act is the neutron bomb of evictions. Enacted into state law in 1986, it gives apartment owners the unconditional right to evict all tenants and go out of the rental business. It allows the owner to evict tenants from rent-controlled apartments, if they plan to sell the units. Under the Ellis Act, the building owner must remove all of the units in the building from the rental market. In other words, the owner

must evict all the tenants and may not single out one tenant or remove just one unit from the rental market. When a landlord invokes the Ellis Act, the apartments cannot be re-rented for five years following the evictions except at the same rent the evicted tenants were paying. There are no such restrictions, however, on converting them to ownership units (e.g., TICs or

condos). As a result, the Ellis Act has become the tool that speculators are using to convert apartment buildings into “for sale” units. North Beach has been and remains ground zero for this kind of speculation.

There are three reasons why Ellis Act evictions and TIC conversions are concentrated here: North Beach is a very desirable place to live, with its coffee shops, eateries and picturesque setting; our housing stock is about two-thirds rental; and the predominate North Beach building type—containing 3-to-6 unit flats—lends itself to conversion into TICs and condominiums.

As a result, a number of enterprising speculators have been buying up buildings in North Beach, invoking the Ellis Act to evict the tenants, adding



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WATERFRONT COMMITTEE REPORT

By Jon Golinger and Andy Katz

The new year has brought with it new possibilities for positive changes on the waterfront. As usual, however, these kinds of possibilities have been accompanied by reminders that organized and active neighborhood participation will be vital to ensuring that our waterfront remains a unique and historic part of San Francisco that we love so much.

Highlights of recent THD Waterfront Committee activities:

- Reviewed the plans for the America's Cup sailing race in 2013, which will have public viewing

areas centered on the northern waterfront at piers 27 and 29. THD has been generally supportive of the concept of bringing this exciting, maritime-oriented, worldwide sporting event to San Francisco's waterfront. However, as details of the many last-minute changes made to the city's deal have emerged, we have been working hard to ensure that the port's plans don't



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Ellis Act Evictions *continued from page 6*

garages and roof decks, then reselling the units as TICs. Long-time THD members and other North Beach residents faced with eviction regularly contact THD for support and assistance.

The statistics are startling. According to the San Francisco Rent Board, over the last six years an average of 30 units a year are the subject of Ellis Act evictions in North Beach, accounting for almost 10 percent of the Ellis Act evictions citywide. These statistics are only the tip of the iceberg as they don't include the many tenants who take a "buy out" when threatened with an Ellis Act eviction.

The problem? Long-standing members of our community, many of them seniors, are facing extraordinary hardships and being forced out of their homes and their community. According to Ted Gullickson of the San Francisco Tenants Union, "[t]he conversions are dramatically changing the nature of neighborhoods because you're replacing low-income renters with more high-income condo owners. And the people that get evicted have a hard time finding a place in the city."

While the seniors at 525 Greenwich resist their pending late-March eviction date, S.F. Affordable Housing LLC's principle, Peter Isakander, has divided

the 525 Greenwich lot into two lots and is proposing to build a 3-story market-rate condominium building at 15 Kramer Place, a narrow, dead-end alley off Greenwich Street near Grant Avenue. On Jan. 19, between 75 and 100 neighbors attended a community meeting to review plans for the condo building proposed to be located on a site occupied by a one-story garage. Nearby neighbors expressed their concerns that the proposed building would cause serious impacts on their light and air, views and privacy. The proposal for a new market-rate condo development, coupled with a 6-unit Ellis Act eviction/TIC conversion, makes this a particularly egregious case.

The city's master plan is predicated on maintaining the city's stock of affordable housing. Given the facts of this case, where the developer is seeking to profit not only by evicting seniors, but by making even more profit from a large-scale condo development opposed by the neighbors, it will be interesting to see whether the Planning Department and Planning Commission reward the developer by approving these projects. THD will continue to monitor the projects and will provide an update in the next *Semaphore*.



FROM THE DESK OF SUPERVISOR CHIU



The new year began with political excitement as the Board of Supervisors unanimously voted to appoint Ed Lee as interim mayor, replacing outgoing Mayor Gavin Newsom. Mayor Lee brings 21 years of experience managing myriad San Francisco city agencies, as well as deep community roots. In addition to the new mayor, four newly elected supervisors were also sworn in at City Hall. I was honored to be re-elected board president, and look forward to continuing to build bridges and provide leadership for our district and our city. We have our work cut out for us this year—the city is facing a projected \$380 million budget shortfall and ballooning pension and health-care costs. We must figure out how to tighten our belts without compromising the values and city services that make us all so proud to live in San Francisco.

Greening the City—One Step at a Time

After seeing enormous yellow pages phone books sit untouched in my apartment lobby for months, and similar piles sitting unwanted on doorsteps throughout our neighborhoods, I learned that 1.5 million yellow pages directories are delivered in our city every year—almost eight pounds of paper for every person in San Francisco. All of these directories find their way to the trash and recycling bins, with a staggering environmental impact and cost to ratepayers. Last week, I introduced first-of-its-kind legislation to reduce the delivery of unwanted yellow pages. The proposed law will minimize waste and save money, while ensuring that every resident who wants a phone book can get one, with particular outreach to senior, disabled and low-income San Franciscans. A strong coalition of support has already formed with the Sierra Club, Senior Action Network, the Green

Chamber of Commerce and other organizations and individuals. It is hoped that someday we will not have to walk by piles of unwanted yellow pages creating litter and blight on our sidewalks.

America's Cup

On New Year's Eve, San Francisco learned that it won its bid to become the host city for the 34th America's Cup in 2013. Akin to a World Series and Super Bowl rolled into several months of sailing races, the Cup will bring more than \$1 billion in economic activity to the Bay Area, showcase our magnificent bay and allow the city to bring aging piers into the 21st century. My office played a central role in the negotiations leading to the submission of the city's winning bid, and I am proud that our hard work will bring new opportunities and excitement to San Francisco and to District 3. Because our northern waterfront piers will play a central role in hosting the America's Cup, I have asked the America's Cup organizers to engage our neighborhoods as we begin planning for this incredible event. I look forward to working with city government staff, the America's Cup team and our neighborhood leaders to address the public transit, small business, recreational, tourist, safety and other logistical preparations for 2013.

North Beach Fire

On New Year's Day, a fire tore through a 19-unit apartment complex in North Beach, displacing 53 residents, including 18 families. I want to thank San Francisco firefighters, the Human Service Agency and the Red Cross for working with my staff and me to assist displaced tenants and provide temporary housing. I also want to thank Broadway Studios,

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BROADWAY FLASHBACK

By Dick Boyd

As I was walking down Broadway past Enrico's awhile ago, I began to think about some of the characters and remarkable people who had inhabited this block of Broadway in the 1950s and '60s. Of course, Enrico's Café brought to mind Enrico Banducci, who turned the entertainment field on its head at his hungry i. My mind also flashed back to Vanessa's as I walked by the Horizon Restaurant & Lounge, housed in the same 1909 building built

for the Fior D'Italia restaurant.

Next, at 494 Broadway, is the Green Tortoise Adventure Travel and Hostel, which in the '50s and '60s had housed the Keane Gallery, owned and run by Walter and Margaret Keane. Walter was definitely one of Broadway's most flamboyant, if not notorious, characters. His humble Nebraska upbringing belied his exploits while in the grasp of John Barleycorn. When he came into your bar it didn't take long to tell if he was drinking. He had a stevedore's vocabulary when in his cups.

On one of his "runs" (a day or more of heavy drinking), he got into it with Banducci after insulting patrons and assaulting a woman at Enrico's Cafe. The altercation resulted in a lawsuit and Keane was charged with disorderly conduct. The charges were eventually dismissed.

While in divorce proceedings, he and his



Vannessi's, circa 1960s.

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JOHN MATTOS, POSTER CHILD

By Kathleen Cannon

John Mattos, successful professional illustrator, has lived and worked in North Beach since 1979.

Though John's list of illustrations is long, impressive and varied (www.johnmattos.com), he may be best known for the postage stamps he has created for the U.S. Postal Service. In May, his first-class postage stamp commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Indianapolis 500 will be available (www.usps).

org). John has 11 other stamps on hold at the postal service, waiting approval. In 2006, his illustration of a female downhill skier for the Turin Olympics became a stamp. It was a happy coincidence that an American woman won the women's slalom.

John has always been certain about one thing: He would be an illustrator. "There was not a moment where I knew I was not going to do it. As a child, I

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wife Margaret became involved in a contentious lawsuit over the copyrights to the paintings that featured “sad eyes,” usually on a female waif wearing Polynesian attire. The question? Who was the actual painter? In 1970, a “paint-off” was scheduled for Union Square. It was covered by Life magazine and provided great fodder for Herb Caen’s column. Margaret appeared and painted the “eyes.” Walter was a no-show. The issue ended in 1986 when a Honolulu judge ordered both to appear in court with easel and paintbrush in hand for a final, final “paint off.”

Again, Walter was a no-show. Margaret was awarded the copyrights to those world famous eyes. At the time, Margaret was married to Dan McGuire, a former *Chronicle* sports writer, who covered the 49ers before marrying Margaret and moving to Hawaii.

There are many other Walter Keane stories. For one, Walter had a passion for playing liars dice, a game that requires skill and a cool head. He had an continuing rivalry with Tommy Vasu, who ran Broadway Parking. She was the first lesbian legally allowed to own a bar. She had owned “Tommy’s Joint” at 529 Broadway before the police, under a mandate by Mayor George Christopher to clean up the town, cracked down. Tommy lost her liquor license. Walter and Tommy used to come into Pierre’s (my old saloon) and partake of the game. The stakes were never less than \$20 per game and hundreds could change hands in a short time. Coke Infante, a legendary North Beach tough, had no love for Walter. When he caught wind that a game was going on he would be there to harass Walter.

If Walter would lose a hand he would needle him mercilessly. Saying things like “Dumb call, Walter,” or “How the hell did you come up with that call?” Walter would lose his cool and his money. Finally, he decided to take action against Coke. He hired Eddie Ascencio (a great Galileo High School athlete and double tough) as a bodyguard. But Walter had more in mind. He wanted Eddie to break Coke’s arm. What Walter didn’t seem to know was that Eddie and Coke were good friends. Anyway, \$200 was determined to be a fair price for the deed.

Eddie went to Coke and they devised a scheme. They went to Rossi’s Pharmacy (now Café Divine) and purchased some plaster of Paris, gauze and a sling. A friendly nurse assisted with the cast. Now it was just show biz for Coke. He went to different joints around North Beach flashing the arm in a cast in a sling. The word got back to Walter and he made good on the \$200 fee to Eddie. Coke and Eddie split the balance after expenses. Truth is, I never knew if Coke said anything to Walter about the scam, but if he did Walter never let on. Walter,

Coke and Eddie are all gone now, but their memories live on with all who knew them.

Next door to Walter’s studio at 492 Columbus was the El Matador, owned and operated by San Francisco native Barnaby Conrad, a modern-day Renaissance man. He is a painter, writer and, for a time, was a bullfighter. He can claim friendships with renowned authors such as John Steinbeck and Sinclair Lewis. He served as a “secretary” of sorts for Lewis, but mostly drove him around and honed



Vernon Alley at the El Matador.

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COBWEBS AND MONKEYS

By Catherine Accardi

Do you want to have a drink amongst cobwebs and monkeys? Well, it's too late now, but you could have 150 years ago at the Cobweb Palace.

Many accounts indicate that the Cobweb Palace was located at Powell and Francisco streets, at approximately what is now 2200 Powell Street, near the Meigg's Wharf. According to documents at the Library of Congress, however, the exact location was on Lumber Street, between Powell and Mason. Back then, that site was at the water's edge at a real north beach.

The Library of Congress record created in 1961

is quoted as follows:

"Originally called the Pioneer Cobweb Palace, it was established in 1856 by Abe Warner, a former butcher. A famous saloon, it was renowned for the immense festoons of cobwebs 6-to-8-feet long, which hung from the ceiling, and for its curious collection of walrus tusks, birds and monkeys, and various other curiosa."



Cobweb Palace interior

COURTESY SAN FRANCISCO HISTORY CENTER, SAN FRANCISCO MAIN LIBRARY

As we can see from these photographs, the structure was a ramshackle building of two or three rooms filled with items from around the world. Abe served crab and clams, deliciously famous around San Francisco. Among the

continued on next page

Broadway Flashback *continued from page 10*

his writing skills under Lewis's critical eye. He has written more than 30 books and articles for *Colliers*, *Argosy* and *True* magazines. His book, "Matador," was made into a movie. He knew legendary bullfighters, including Manolete and Belmonte, who served as his bullfighting mentor. That career ended in a goring during a bullfight.

The interior of the El Matador featured a lot of bullfighting paraphernalia, including a huge bull's head behind the bar. There was a large enclosure where Barnaby kept his beloved parrots, which he still possesses today at his Santa Barbara retreat. John Cooper supplied entertainment on the piano and Vernon Alley on the bass.

The El Matador became a magnet for movie stars while they were in San Francisco. To name just

a few there was Marilyn Monroe, Frank Sinatra, Bing Crosby, Lucille Ball and Walter Huston. Steinbeck and Truman Capote dropped in, too. For a great read about the various stars that came into the Matador, pick up a copy of "Name Dropping" by Conrad.

It's still amazing to me that in a space of about 40 feet along Broadway some of San Francisco's most illustrious figures of the '50s and '60s had presided over their respective flocks. Barnaby Conrad, Enrico Banducci, Walter Keane and Coke Infante were as different as night and day, but legends all.

For info on Margaret Keane and the eyes check out keaneeyes@earthlink.net

Dick Boyd is the author of "Broadway North Beach — The Golden Years."



John Mattos, Poster Child *continued from page 9*

had a “big car period—drew a car everyday.” From growing up on a dairy farm outside Modesto, he was accepted at the prestigious Art Center College of Design in Pasadena.

The Art Center was a good fit. He expanded his interest in drawing and moved on to air-brush illustration. While still in school, he sold a few album covers. Upon graduating, John created movie posters for Mel Brooks and Burt Reynolds films. “As an illustrator, one project leads to next,” he says.

He left to travel in Western Europe for six months and stayed two years. Returning to the United States, he moved to San Francisco. “I always

knew I would live in San Francisco,” he says. For John and wife-to-be Laura, another Modesto high school graduate with whom he reconnected, San Francisco meant North Beach.

John’s work is in no way limited to postage stamps. He has illustrated children’s books and created event posters for activates such as the California Mille Miglia and California Historic Racing Group. Most recent is the 2011 poster memorializing the 100th anniversary of the Pubic Utilities Commission.

He is also very happy with the illustration and logo he created for Café Americain, the 1930s-style French “Gypsy” jazz ensemble that plays at Caffé

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Cobwebs and Monkeys *continued from page 11*

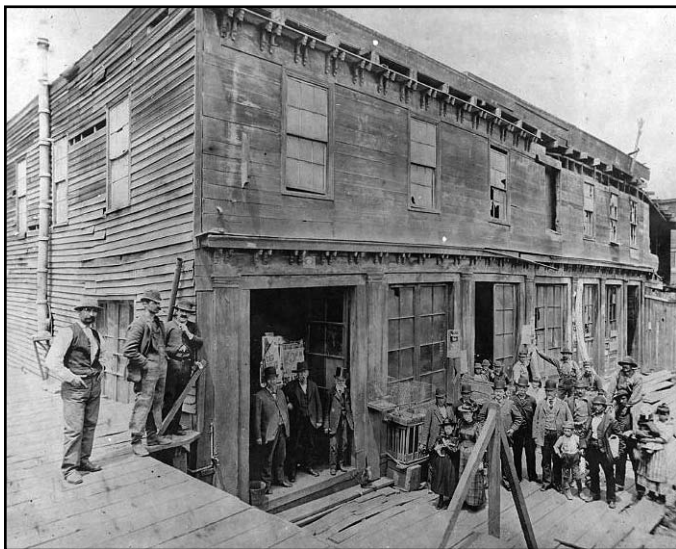
debris and menagerie, he served the finest liquors, French brandy, Spanish wines and English ale. The Cobweb offered something of interest to many types of people. Besides delicious seafood, liquor and animals, nude paintings which adorned the walls. It is said Abe collected more than 1,000 of same.

Quite an interesting gathering is posing below

for the camera, consisting of men, women, children, cats, dogs, monkeys and birds. One historic account of a visit to the establishment notes: “The strangest feature of that most strange hostelry was the amazing wealth of cobwebs that mantled it. Cobwebs as dense as crape waved in dusty rags from the ceiling, they vested the pictures and festooned the picture-frames that shone dimly through them. Not one of these cobwebs was ever molested.” It is said that the unconstrained resident parrot had a taste for liquor and could curse in four languages.

In the photo on the previous page, a bird rests in the center on its perch. One of the residents, a white cockatoo would screech, “I’ll have rum and gum, what’ll you have?”

By the late 1890s, business was declining, Abe retired, and eventually a breakwater was constructed near the site. The place that had been at the water’s edge was now inland, to be replaced by new urban fabric. I walked around the location of the Cobweb just the other day. With a touch of imagination, and these images in my hand, I was back in the day. I’ll have rum. Hold the gum! ♦♦



Cobweb Palace exterior

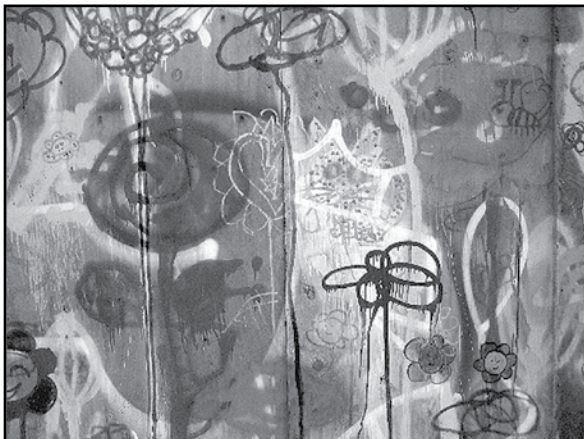
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ARTISTS & ARCHITECTURE: GIVING LIFE TO BUILDINGS "IN BETWEEN"

By Christine Madrid French

Transitions, the process of changing from one state to another, seem to define the condition of many downtown neighborhoods in 2010. The tidal up-and-down economy of the last 20 years has left scores of empty buildings in its wake, marked by empty windows and falling cornices. What can preservationists and their communities do with these historic structures, while waiting for new ideas, new businesses and new prospects? I recently stumbled upon a successful collaboration that is keeping one prominent piece of San Francisco alive while we crawl through the down cycle.

The 1912 Colombo Bldg. across the way from the Transamerica Pyramid, is certainly something special. Also known as the Drexler-Colombo Bldg. the structure is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and as a landmark in the Jackson Square Historic District (142 acres containing some of the city's oldest commercial buildings). The building has withstood numerous threats to its existence. It now represents an urban line-in-the-sand where the low-scale North Beach neighborhood meets the high-rise Financial District.



MURAL BY CHRISTOPHER FARRIS

I kept passing the building, while both driving and walking, and finally decided to investigate the reason for the Alice-in-Wonderland-scale plywood playing cards inserted in its string of display windows. Christopher Farris, an energetic 40-something artist, is the mind behind this guerrilla art exhibit. His "Space Between" gallery occupies the corner of the building, a key commercial spot that had remained empty until building owner Luigi Barassi invited him to set up shop.

Barassi has a specific agenda for the building's future. He wants to retain the integrity of the "envelope," and attract tenants that can work within the parameters of an historic structure. Meanwhile, the artist and the businessman have an informal arrangement—no rent—and Farris moves in and out when the renovation team needs access to the building. His art works well within the medium of a deconstructed space, one that complements his photographs and sculptures of those "little things, quiet things" that, once observed, challenge the mind to question the intersections of nature and the city, the permanent and the passing through and the endless processes of decay and rebirth. Papers disintegrated on the sidewalk, bird footprints entombed in old concrete and rusted-out rebar are a few of his chosen subjects.

Farris began as an artist by building things out of the ubiquitous metal scraps that spontaneously collect in the desert. On the Nevada ranch where he grew up, under the eyes of his "cowboy dad," he was attracted to the ruined buildings erupting from clusters of cottonwood trees and edging the alfalfa fields. Each structural remnant became his personal "clubhouse," a subject for interpretation with "plenty of space to do what you want and be who you want."

In a way, he has found the same environment for experimentation in San Francisco, with Barassi's bless-

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NORTH BEACH GUERRILLA GARDENS

By Miriam Owens

My neighbor Anna got me going. She wanted to clear a triangle of weeds at Mason and Columbus and plant it with sunflowers. We pulled the weeds. The soil looked forlorn, so I bought two bags of compost. Anna planted her sickly potted alyssum and some sunflower seeds. I collected nasturtium seeds from plants setting seed nearby, and a garden was launched.

A week after we cleared the plot, someone planted several different succulents and grasses in it. Anna watered it regularly, but noticed that someone else was also watering. Some pansies appeared and one day Anna found the other gardener at work on the plot. Joe had recently quit his job to study horticulture and found our plot a great testing ground for his new interest.

The three of us met one afternoon to work together to plant yet another weedy mess. We cleared a treeless square of soil on Francisco Street, by the middle school. My habit as a gardener is to make sure the

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Art & Architecture *continued from page 13*

ing. His occupation of an underutilized urban building draws our attention to a resource that captures and expresses the history of North Beach. He has held a few shows since last February, attended by dozens of people, and participates in organized "ArtWalks" by opening the building for visitors. Yet, more than that, this team (business + art) has effectively regenerated a broken-down corner and created a bridge connecting two prosperous downtown areas.

Occupying vacant buildings with artists and artworks is not a new idea, perhaps, but triangulating the

business owner, the artist and the preservationist is less widely utilized. Here is an opportunity, however, to keep a building on the preservationists' "watch list" from falling into dereliction. Providing people with the opportunity to interact with an historic building through the third-party of creative arts can reveal hidden potentials and benefit everyone involved.

Christine Madrid French is the director of the Modernism + Recent Past program at the National Trust for Historic Preservation. This piece originally appeared in that organization's publication.





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Trieste on Wednesday evenings (“and does a lot for the neighborhood”). His movie poster for “The Rocketeer” was selected by the American Film Institute as one of the 100 all-time best movie posters. He received a gold medal from the New York Society of Illustrators (“rare, they are very New York-centric”).

For 24 years, John’s studio was at 1546 Grant Ave., between Filbert and Union streets. The ground-level storefront was formerly a bar called “The Place,” where Herb Caen coined the term “beatnik.” A famous hangout, it is referenced in Jack Kerouac’s book, “Big Sur.” Kerouac used The Place for a mail drop, and refers to it in his poem “The Address.”

John and Laura lived at the Grant Avenue location for several years. When children began arriving, however, the family needed a larger living place, so they moved behind the Alfa Center on Powell, from where they watched Carlo visually estimate Alfa Romeo repairs. Then in 2002, “when the kids were out the door” (one is now a teacher and a son is still in USF), John and Laura Sample Mattos (a book editor, who at one time worked at Keystone Corner) moved back to Grant Avenue. The trade-off? Life on Grant Avenue “can get noisy; we have no garage and our space is smaller. Square-foot price is expensive.”

He recently moved his studio from Telegraph Hill to Waverly Place. Here in the heart of Chinatown, in a brick building with no outside address that once served as a dining hall for the Lee Family Tong, he continues to create. With a view of Coit Tower from the fire escape, he can always see the neighborhood which drew him to San Francisco.

What does John most miss about the neighborhood that once was? “I miss those Basque-style restaurants, Pantara, Dumidi, Des Alps...” Now he likes most “being able to walk everywhere in North Beach



PHOTO BY KATHLEEN CANNON

and seeing people I know on every block—small town within a big town.”

Over the years, John’s hobbies and interests have included membership in the South End Rowing Club and fascination with outboard boat motors. After searching for 50 years, he now owns a 1936 Waterwitch outboard boat motor, which stands in his studio sporting two “Buck Rogers’ rockets.” Some 2,000 of these engines were made, of which 1,000 are owned by one person in Wisconsin.

Grant Avenue living is good now. His nephew’s family lives in the back unit and just had a baby. He hopes his children will travel, but it is great having his daughter a block away. His wish for the neighborhood is “to have vibrant businesses in storefronts, like when I moved to the area. It would make the neighborhood better. The 800 block of Valencia, it would be great if it were like that.”

On Friday nights John likes going to an open class at the Art Institute on Russian Hill where he just enjoys “drawing, creating, it is open to the public, costs \$7..., it is great”).

He is looking forward to being at the Tech in Art Institute in Savannah, Ga., where he will instruct. “Now people draw with Wacom pads and computers.” The younger generation still learns to draw on paper just as John did, but his own work is now completely digital.



THE ALFA NOSE

By Kathleen Cannon

Rogue Holidayz

THDers sparkled, quaffed specially created mulled wine and nibbled tasty hors d'oeuvres at the 2010 THD holiday party at Rogue Ales Public House. Great location, well attended and a fabulous success. Kudos to organizers Sarah Kliban and Merle Goldstone. Mal Sharpe's Big Money in Jazz Band played red-hot jazz interlaced with creative lyrics, including a convoluted version of "The Bucket's Got a Hole in It." *"We take little white pills on Saturday night... we live on Telegraph Hill Life's great on Telegraph Hill... driving that Coupe deVille, and taking those little white pills on Saturday night."* Now, those little white pills are most likely to be Ambien.

Mal does love Telegraph Hill. He met his wife as well as his mother-in-law on the Hill in 1964. The Big Money in Jazz Band still plays at Savoy Tivoli, Saturdays from 3 to 6 p.m. Recently, the ensemble included a visiting drummer from Paris and a trombone player from Adelaide, Australia. Thus, they are a world-class band. "Grant Avenue is a crossroads to

the world...where you get to meet and engage with people from all over," says Mal. He loves it.

Bookmark

Barnes & Noble (yes, a chain, but historic with free wi-fi) closed on Bay Street on Dec. 31. Ross will take the space next to World Market. That leaves two bookstores in the vicinity of Telegraph Hill—William Stout Architectural Books, a treasure trove of design-related books, and, City Lights, a treasure box of beat history from which poets escape to play all night like Pixar characters. Alas, the digital genie was released and hard copy has become an endangered species. But Friends of the Library has stepped up and opened a neat café in Fort Mason, which makes its used book and music store yet more appealing. Walk toward the warehouses on a balmy day. On a Sunday, you pass through two farmers' markets.

Tune In, Turn On and Get Out? —Closures

First, Washington Square Bar & Grill in August 2010, followed by Enrico's in January, and two significant historical landmark restaurants in North Beach stand empty. Enrico's filed for bankruptcy. Not the first bankruptcy, Enrico himself saw several. Christina and Semus Cronin (chef/owner) kept the historic ambience and offered class cabaret music. It's hoped they or someone equally concerned with its historic importance can bring the place back. (Although another theory suggests Enrico's was a "kept" restaurant, supported by club owners to draw well-heeled clientele to the strip, until it



Mal Sharpe and his band entertain THD holiday revelers at Rogue Ales Public House.

PHOTO: KATHLEEN CANNON

continued on next page

SEMAPHORE CONTRIBUTOR PUBLISHES NEIGHBORHOOD HISTORY

By Art Peterson

“Are you still looking at the same photo?” Catherine Accardi’s husband, Michael, would ask, interrupting her study of a vintage North Beach image that she had been perusing for several hours.

Accardi remained undeterred and returned to

the photos she magnified as much as 300 times to find workmen, signage, laundry and chickens often not apparent to the naked eye. Such observation was a key element in the production of her book, *“Images of America—San Francisco’s North Beach and Telegraph Hill”* (Arcadia Publishing, 2010).

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THE ALFA NOSE

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was simply too in the red.) Something, anything to gentrify Broadway would be welcome.

Washington Square Bar & Grill, explained former owner Liam Tiernan, fell victim to the economy and an overzealous landlord. Liam noted the space needed a lot of work. He and the landlord remodeled to code and entered a 30-year lease. Their target was to maintain its historic/literary significance and appeal by offering celebrity bartenders, such as Michael McCourt, and the classic menu. The clientele, however, was changing (e.g., dying). So the target became a new audience, bringing the Washbag to the attention and needs of the younger generation. “No question about it, the economy was rough. The landlord said, ‘if things got tough, come to me first.’” So in June, Liam requested “wobble room” on rent to put together an investment group. The landlord replied with a 3-day notice. Liam is sad it went down that way, but he’s looking forward.

Red, Yellow and Green Zones

Tow trucks are in the assent on Broadway. At 8 p.m., on a weekend night, the street is impassable, blocked by competing tow trucks. William Stout confirmed an important client was towed from a nearby yellow zone in record time. Brandon of the Beat Museum summed it up poetically: “The city’s

rapacious pursuit of revenue...” \$450 parking fines make out-of-towners think twice about enjoying local restaurants and businesses. However, green “park-lets” are sprouting — Café Greco, Café Roma, Tony’s Pizza and more to come. Not restricted to customers, anyone can sit in these park-lets. Businesses along Columbus still benefit most because it is the main thoroughfare for foot traffic. At the same time, a lot of Broadway reads, “For Rent.” Big Al’s is closing, so if the porn industry is an economic indicator, we may have hit bottom.

Other Signs of Intelligencia

On April 6, the Beat Museum is looking forward to hosting Harvard Ph.D. and psychologist Ralph Metzger. He was “an intellectual powerhouse of the psychedelic era” and worked on psilocybin projects with Timothy Leary.

Dick Boyd, who worked with the San Francisco Historical Society to arrange the successful History of Telegraph Hill presentation at the Jewish Community Center last winter, is meeting with John Harris of the Majestic Hotel. Harris (a former Herb Caen favorite) is organizing a panel to film “A History of Saloons, Prominent Bartenders Since World War II.” Slated for PBS, many North Beach

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THE RUMORS ARE TRUE!

THERE'S A GREAT BREAKFAST AT THE WHARF

As *The Semaphore* publishes only four times a year, Carol Peterson reviews only restaurants she considers of high quality. "Why waste space on a restaurant you can not advise readers to patronize," she says.

By Carol Peterson

Beach Street Grill, breakfast/lunch/dinner
380 Beach St., San Francisco, CA 94113
415-867-1711

Can a restaurant worthy of local palettes be found at Fisherman's Wharf among the fake Gucci handbags and "I [heart] S.F." coffee mugs? According to my friend, Gianni Imgariola, who owns kiosks for tourist attractions at the wharf, the answer is "Yes." Gianni told me I had to try the outstanding breakfast at Beach Street Grill. Because I respected Gianni as a foodie, I decided to give it a try.

This homey restaurant, with red tablecloths and an inviting atmosphere, is owned and run by Christine Anderson Van Muers, who is there every-day. The minute you walk into the restaurant, this tall redhead greets you with a smile and a welcome that makes you feel as if you are walking into your aunt's kitchen. Christine worked with her restaurateur mother for years in Marin and was a waitress for 25 years in some of the most famous restaurants in San Francisco. From this experience, Christine said, "I learned what people like and I give them the food I like to eat, as well." When the space came available on Beach Street, Christine was ready. She and her husband, Johan, who worked at the Tadich Grill for 15 years, decided it was time to do their own deal. And what a deal it is.

Our meal started with Peet's coffee, Christine's favorite, hence her customers get it, too. A fruit salad

followed. This is not your airport plastic container, cardboard-tasting fruit salad. Served in a sundae glass, the fruit is seasonal and fresh, right down to the pomegranate seeds sprinkled throughout.

I am a lover of Eggs Benedict, but have had so many bad versions of this dish, I rarely order it. BSG offers six different varieties of this treat and the ones I tasted are among the best I have ever experienced. My favorite plate was offered in two different styles: The Fresh Crab Benedict has 2 ounces of crab, avocado and a warm slice of tomato to give it a little pop. The Wild Salmon Benedict has a generous portion of wild smoked salmon, not salty as is often the case, also served with a warm tomato slice. The eggs are poached and drained perfectly and covered with a smooth Benedict sauce. Even her traditional Eggs Benedict is changed slightly by using ham instead of Canadian bacon.

Of the many omelets offered, our favorite was the California Girl. It is three slices of crispy chopped bacon, eggs, tomato, avocado and sour cream. The flavors jump out with every bite. It is served with a small fruit cup.

A breakfast special at BSG is the homemade biscuits, light and fluffy, served with sausage gravy, two eggs and hash browns. This is a meal that can be shared by two. Again, Christine has added a twist by making the sausage gravy with Italian sausage.

Of course, a breakfast menu would not be worthy without French toast and pancakes. Christine has a wonderful play on French toast, as she spreads egg bread with cream cheese, makes a sandwich, dips it in egg batter and cooks it in butter. But the pancakes are "What everyone comes back for," says

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Accardi's Neighborhood History *continued from page 17*

Directing her interviewer to the structure at Columbus and Kearny that appears as the cover photo for her book she says, "Look, there's a person in that window."

Accardi's North Beach book came about rather fortuitously. Arcadia Press has published approximately 500 books nationwide focusing on image-saturated versions of local history. Accardi, a native San Franciscan had, through no fault of her own, taken up residency in Walnut Creek Arcadia approached this history buff and photographer to do a Walnut Creek contribution to its collection. She was able to excavate a community that existed before the arrival of Nordstrom's.

However, working on the Walnut Creek book, she noticed a startling gap in Arcadia's publishing coverage. Although the publisher had 20 books on San Francisco neighborhoods, they had none on North Beach and Telegraph Hill. She proposed the book that would be the perfect fit for her.

Born 61 years ago on Greenwich Street of Italian immigrant parents, she did not speak English until she was 10 years old. The "urban fabric" of the neighborhood became part of her life from the time of her baptism at SS Peter and Paul's Church through her "hip-

pie" days as a regular at The Coffee Gallery and the Minimum Daily Requirement. But Accardi, who now maintains dual residences in North Beach and Walnut Creek, developed an interest in San Francisco that went far beyond hanging out.

She owns 50



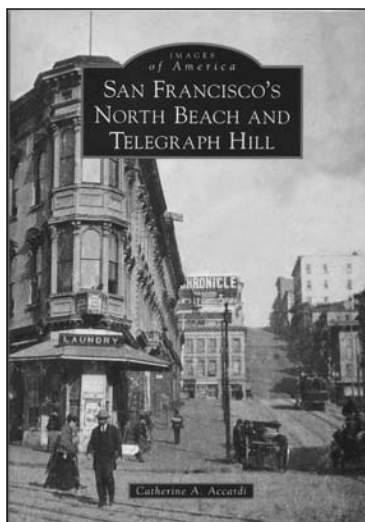
Catherine Accardi

first editions of books about San Francisco's past, including a copy of *"The Annals of San Francisco, 1855,"* which she purchased from the Argonaut bookstore on Sutter Street in such delicate condition that she can't open it. (She has another copy she uses for her research.)

For Accardi, "*San Francisco's North Beach and Telegraph Hill*" has been a labor of love. Most of the images in the book come from the San Francisco History Collection at the San Francisco Main Library. As the book is supposedly a profit-making venture, the library charged Accardi \$30 per photo. "I've invested \$4,500 in images. I couldn't take on every photo that came my way. If an image told me a story, I'd buy it."

In addition to her personal library of San Francisco volumes, Accardi got help from FoundSF, the wiki for San Francisco people's history founded by Chris Carlsson, who for many years has been our indispensable production guy at *The Semaphore*.

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"PORT CITY"

NEW BOOK ABOUT OUR WATERFRONT'S HISTORIC PAST SETS THE STAGE FOR ITS UNCERTAIN FUTURE

By Jon Golinger

Change is neither always bad nor always good. Like our famous fog, change can sometimes be jarring and disheartening. Other times, change can come as a welcome relief.

This theme of change as neither bad nor good, but simply as a fact, permeates an enlightening new book chock-full of rich stories and more than 400 exquisite maps and photographs of San Francisco's unique and historic waterfront. "*Port City: The History and Transformation of the Port of San Francisco, 1848-2010*" was written by architectural historian Michael Corbett and recently published by the nonprofit group San Francisco Architectural Heritage. While "*Port City*" is by no means the first book to attempt to tell the story of San Francisco's port, it not only does so in detailed and eminently readable fashion, but will also

quickly become an invaluable resource for those who don't merely wish to know *what* our waterfront is, but *why* it is that way. As Corbett explains in his introduction: "I have tried to answer questions that others haven't asked: Why does San Francisco's waterfront—the port—look the way it does? . . . [T]he character and appearance of this unique part of the city are the result of the interaction of various historical forces, such as those related to engineering, administration, architecture and planning, social factors, politics, labor, economics and trade, business and transportation. This book addresses these subjects while seeking to understand how they influenced the physical history of the port."

"*Port City*" surveys those subjects in eight self-contained sections, each of which is worth the price of the entire book. In "The Port Landscape and the City,"



View from shore of the T-wharf of the Arctic Oil Works, San Francisco, c. 1880s. Behind is Yerba Buena Island, and the closer flat-top island is Mission Rock.

COURTESY SAN FRANCISCO MARITIME NATIONAL HISTORICAL MUSEUM, A11.22.453.1N

Port City *continued*

Corbett explains the inseparable bond between the waterfront and San Francisco: "If any city might justifiably have been called Port City, it was San Francisco for its first 100 years. The port did not grow so much to serve the city as the other way around."

The section called "Commerce" provides a rich history of the economic engines of transportation, trade and shipping that drove the development of the port and the creation of its most recognizable features, such as finger piers, bulkheads and the Ferry Building. In "The Board of State Harbor Commissioners," we are privy to the inside story of the creation and evolution of the agency established in 1863 to impose order on the chaotic and self-interested early development of the port by real-estate speculators, merchants and shipowners. "Ships, Rails and Trucks" describes the changing nature of transportation along the waterfront, while "Tenants and Workers" makes clear that the story of the port is not merely one about businesses and buildings, but also about the lives of real people just trying to survive. After reading this chapter, readers will understand that "riggers," "stevedores" and "wharfingers"—such as the late Nicholas LaRocco, a long-time Port of San Francisco wharfinger—were not merely job titles, but real people willing to do the difficult and dangerous jobs required to make our waterfront work.

"Port City" does, however, provide a revealing window into the story behind the structures that make

up the physical shape of the port as it exists today. In "Engineering," Corbett puts the port into context by comparing it to other ports around the nation and the world, giving special attention to the similarities between San Francisco's port and the Port of New York. For readers interested in not just the outside

of piers, but what is inside and underneath them, this chapter explains exactly what the piers are composed of and why. In "Architecture and Planning," "Port City" does an impressive job of making the complicated history of start-and-stop planning at the port seem linear and clear. For those who have always been confused by the apparently random pier numbering and design styles varying from pier to pier, this chapter will set you straight.

Finally, in "The Port Since 1969," Corbett briefly attempts to recount perhaps the port's most volatile and troubled period and bring the story up to the current day. Much

of this section is a tale of maritime and economic decline and a reminder of the many wild and failed waterfront development projects, such as the proposal to construct a waterfront skyscraper as tall as the Washington Monument just south of the Ferry Building and the plan to replace all of the piers along the northern waterfront with a concrete "Embarcadero City" of hotels, office buildings and other commercial uses.

If there is one flaw in the book, it is that its

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COURTESY PORT OF SAN FRANCISCO

HANNA CHEDYAK: THE EYES AND EARS OF TELEGRAPH HILL

By Art Peterson

Very little happens on the slopes of Telegraph Hill that Hanna Chedyak, the proprietor since 1997 of Fog Hill Market at the corner of Kearny and Green streets, does not know about.

Hanna is a friendly and outgoing person. Unfortunately, much of what he has to report is not good news. "In the last two years, eight people who shop here regularly have told me about how they have been mugged in the neighborhood. The way it often happens is a couple of guys drive up in a car, one hops out and snatches a purse or attacks some-

one for their wallet. I don't think most of the people around here know about this."

This hazard, one may allow, is life in the big city, but it may also be a factor in another trend that Hanna has noticed: transiency. "Of course, I have customers who have been with me from the beginning, but every month the moving vans show up for at least three customers leaving. But another three are right behind them moving in."

In addition to the unsettling narratives that Hanna has to pass on, he also has a repository of amusing neighborhood stories. Here's one. "One day

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From the Desk of Supervisor Chiu

cont'd from page 8

that opened up its wonderful event space to shelter the residents in the immediate aftermath of the fire. Broadway Studios represent the wonderful generosity that makes our city so great. Because I have experienced the devastation of too many fires in my time as an elected official, please check your fire alarms and review your disaster preparation checklist.

North Beach Clubhouse

As a result of very tight budgetary times, last year, Rec and Park pulled its recreation staff out of clubhouses and shifted those staffing resources to larger recreation centers. For some clubhouses that provide vital recreation space and playground oversight—such as North Beach Clubhouse—removal of staffing has been particularly difficult for the neighborhood. Neighborhood residents have begun a dialogue with Rec and Park about various options to keep the North Beach Clubhouse doors open at least part-time. My office is involved in these conversations, and I wholeheartedly support efforts to give

our neighborhoods back the clubhouse they fought so hard to build not very long ago.

Moving Forward

I am excited to report on other results of our office's work over this past year. The city administrator is putting the finishing touches on the appointment vacancy website I championed to facilitate greater participation in citizen boards, commissions and task forces for all San Franciscans. Stemming from meetings I convened on crime victims, departments that provide services to victims are now in greater communication with each other, and a centralized victim services website has been designed. The MTA, in consultation with my office, is working on a proposal to restrict the movement of tour buses on certain streets in North Beach, a proposal supported by many Telegraph Hill Dwellers.

As always, please don't hesitate to contact me or my staff to talk about ideas and issues important to you.





THE THD BOARD

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Eyes and Ears of Telegraph Hill *continued from page 22*

I found on the street a container filled with bread dough. I brought it inside and put it in the refrigerator, waiting for the owner to show up. No one came. So what to do? An Italian lady who lives nearby agreed to convert it into bread loaves. She did and I was able to distribute it to customers pretty much on a first-come, first-served basis."

Hanna won't be going anywhere soon, but he is frank to report that business isn't what it once was. "It used to be I'd get about 300 customers a day. But this Super Bowl Sunday, normally one of my busiest days, I had 205 customers. . .

"When Speedy's went out, I thought my business would be picking up, but it really hasn't. There are a lot of people out of work. I used to get up to 70 cases of beer at a time from my distributor, now I get 20."

Hanna isn't able to give credit except to a couple

of very senior people, who pay him once a month. Some customers, however, establish an account in advance, which they draw on. "This works for everything but alcohol. I want them to remember the next morning what they spent it on," said Hanna.

He works hard at not complaining, but he finds the city's licensing and taxes can become a bit overwhelming. "If I want a scanner, I need to pay for a \$100 license. My scanner doesn't even work that well, so I've just said forget it.

"If I want to put fruits and vegetables outside or tables those are more license fees. It goes on and on."

What can readers take away from these stories? Shop locally is the message. Hanna and other neighborhood grocers need our support and we need them as neighborhood fixtures.



Fog Hill Market

PHOTO BY ART PETERSON

CAPTION CONTEST



Here's a photo of a familiar Telegraph Hill venue taken in another time. Readers are challenged to create a caption for the photo and send it to apeterson@nwp.org. Creativity counts a lot. The winner will receive a complimentary dinner at the next THD dinner event.

PHOTO COURTESY OF LUCIE A. FAULKNER

THE ALFA NOSE

continued from page 17

restaurants and bars will be included, such as 12 Adler (Specs), Vesuvio, 622 Club — now O'Reilly's — Capps Corner, Gino & Carlo's and Enrico's. McCourt, Bruce Bellingham, Dick and John met at Pier 23 Cafe to discuss the plans.

William Stout announces the arrival of *"The Port,"* a history of San Francisco's port, and *"The California Houses of Gordon Drake,"* one of which is on Telegraph Hill.

Promise of Spring

The Year of the Rabbit is off to a hop as of Feb. 3, with the Easter Bunny close behind. Rabbits are the luckiest sign. Washington Square is restored and magnificently green, Gerry Crowley points out. (Gerry is again on the sick list and welcomes support from friends) ... Spring has sprung already. Gather for a centennial spring celebration in the square, adorn 1911 costumes, play croquet and sip tea. Relax and smell the roses.



Accardi's N'hood History *continued from page 19*

Then there was Google. "I don't think I could have written this book without Google," she says. But more than anything, the motivation for this book springs from Accardi's love of San Francisco. She may live part of each week with the bridge-and-tunnel crowd, but, she says, "I'd die if I couldn't come to San Francisco." One gets the impression that she is not exaggerating.

The book is available at the Beat Museum, Biordi Antiques, Eastwind Books, Schein & Schein and William Stout Architectural Books.



An Accardi Favorite

We asked Accardi to supply us with one of her favorite photos. This is the one she sent us, along with the following explanation:

The photographer, J.B. Monaco, is standing on Vallejo Street looking down Kearny Street toward Broadway. Notice the children sitting in the middle of the hill and the dog lying on the sidewalk near the neighborhood grocery store. It is another day in North Beach near Telegraph Hill.

PHOTOGRAPH CREDIT: J.B. MONACO, COURTESY OF DICK MONACO

MORE THAN ITALIAN!

One of the prevailing myths regarding our neighborhood is that it is a good place to get Italian food, but that it's deficient in the varied cuisines found elsewhere in the city. This is not true. As evidence we provide here an incomplete list of local ethnic food delights found in North Beach.

ASIAN FUSION

- The House
1230 Grant Ave.
*Wasabi house noodles, grilled sea bass with garlic ginger soy

BOLIVIAN

- Pena Pachamama
1630 Powell St.
*Bolivian tapas plate, live music

CHINESE (out of the ordinary)

- R & G Lounge
631 Kearny St.
*Salt & pepper-fried crab, snow pea leaves, lichee martini

FRENCH

- Cafe Jacqueline
1454 Grant Ave.
*Onion soup, chocolate souffle

GREEK

- Estia
1224 Grant Ave.
*Gyros platter, Saganaki

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THE NEW THD T-SHIRT IS HERE

Show off your neighborhood pride with the new Telegraph Hill Dwellers t-shirt. The 100% cotton black t-shirt features NORTH BEACH on the chest, and the THD logo on the right sleeve. Also available as a 100% cotton fleece long-sleeved hooded pullover sweatshirt for those chilly San Francisco summer nights. Quantities are limited, so reserve yours today



T-Shirt	Hooded Sweat Shirt
S--XL \$12	S-XL \$28
XXL -\$15	XXL \$ 30
Youth XL \$10	Zip Hood -S-XL \$22

THD Members
receive a \$2.00
discount on
each shirt

**Contact Sarah Kliban to reserve
or purchase your shirts- 781-2278
Cash & checks only please**

North Beach Guerrilla Gardens *continued from page 14*

soil is enriched, so I bought compost and added it to the freshly turned soil. Joe planted alyssum and pansies, Anna and I scattered poppy seeds and another garden was launched.

The garden needed to be watered, as it was September. Warm days and wind dried out the soil. Joe's partner walked by the Francisco plot to and from work everyday, so he became a fourth guerrilla gardener. He carried water in wine bottles and a canvas bag.

I am only in San Francisco part time, but I cleared and planted two more tree squares along the same street. I amended the soil and scattered three different kinds of poppy seeds. I watered everyday for the two weeks I was here. By the time I was leaving, seeds had sprouted and I thought it might be interesting to get the middle-school kids into the project.

I gave my name and phone number to the schoolyard guard asking him to have the principal call me if she was interested in a garden project for the students. The same day, Jane, the school's community outreach coordinator, called me. She was quite enthusiastic. I said I really just initially needed some watering back up. She agreed to do it herself, becoming the fifth guerrilla gardener. We talked about planning a planting day for the students.

Recently, about a dozen students, Anna, Jane and I, planted 200 daffodils and tulips along the neglected Powell Street front of Francisco Middle School. The kids were excited and enthusiastic. The principal came out to thank me. I told her I walk by there daily when I am in San Francisco, so I was inspired to beautify my neighborhood.

Next spring, when the bulbs are blooming, I'll organize phase two of the planting project. I see some malvas along the school wall and maybe some red geraniums, the official flower of North Beach, between the daffodils.

It's possible other people will pick up on the spirit of the gardens and find places to do their own. That's guerrilla gardening at its best. ♦



Gardening is fun!

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PARKS, TREES & BIRDS REPORT



By Judy Irving

Audubon Christmas Bird Count

The second annual Telegraph Hill Audubon Christmas Bird Count took place on Dec. 28. Our team consisted of Nancy Shanahan, Aaron Peskin, Elizabeth Sojourner, Glenn Neville and me. We traveled 4½ miles on foot and were out there for six hours, not counting breaks.

We started at 7:30 a.m., at Caffè Trieste for espresso, took a tea-and-cookies break at our house on the Greenwich Steps, had lunch at the Plant Cafe at Pier 5 and rested at Aaron and Nancy's house on the Filbert Steps as the rain came down heavier and heavier. So it was indeed a leisurely count! We covered mainly the eastern, more wooded

side of Telegraph Hill: Vallejo Steps, Filbert Steps, Greenwich Steps and Pioneer Park. We also walked along the waterfront from Pier 23 to Pier 5.

The annual event is a great way to support Audubon's nationwide count, which has been providing invaluable information about bird populations for more than 100 years, and to get to know our avian neighbors. This year we saw 34 species, up from last year's count of 24. At Pier 5, we saw a Clark's grebe feeding a fish to a Western grebe (see photo just after the hand-off), which we later learned was a pair-bond activity between two adults; if they breed, they'll have hybrids! Very cool. Check Glenn Nevill's photo site to see the entire sequence: http://raptor-gallery.com/2010_12_28

continued on next page



Clark's grebe (l), Western grebe (r) PHOTO BY GLENN NEVILL

PARKS, TREES & BIRDS REPORT

In addition to Clark's and Western grebes, we saw the following birds:

Common loon, brown pelican, double-crested cormorant, red-shouldered hawk, Heermann's gull, ring-billed gull, Western gull, rock pigeon, mourning dove, red-masked parakeet (aka cherry-headed conure aka wild parrot), Anna's hummingbird, American crow, chestnut-backed chickadee, bushtit, pygmy nuthatch, ruby-crowned kinglet, hermit thrush, American robin, scrub jay, European starling, yellow-rumped warbler, Townsend's warbler, California towhee, fox sparrow, song sparrow, white-crowned sparrow, golden-crowned sparrow, dark-eyed junco, house finch, lesser goldfinch, American goldfinch and house sparrow.

Montgomery Street Stone Pine

As of this writing, the Department of Public Works has begun repair work on Montgomery Street between Union and Filbert streets, near the Italian stone pine. DPW urban forester Carla Short is well aware of the risk of root-cutting, and has been in touch with neighbors and her crews about this. By now, the pine should be supported, the roadway repaired and a new chicane (curb bulb-out) installed, which will protect the tree from further damage by tall trucks and also will slow down traffic. Sidewalk improvements on the east side of the street, opposite the pine tree, include a new ADA-compliant curb ramp.

Washington Square Tree Work

A tall, full-bodied Italian stone pine near the northeast corner of Washington Square was deemed to be a hazard by three

certified arborists, and was cut down in January (see photo), while the remaining stone pines along Stockton Street were pruned by a Rec & Park crew. The square has lost several trees in recent years, but these will be replaced with species that respect the square's original landscape plan. Our esteemed landscape architect, Craig Heckman, has been working with the Friends of Washington Square on appropriate replacement species. For example, evergreen pears will be replaced with *Michelia* (a member of the magnolia family), and the Italian stone pine will be replaced with either another

continued on page 30



Italian stone pine, Washington Square: Tree living: photo by Craig Heckman; Tree cut: photo by Judy Irving



WASHINGTON SQUARE TREE MANAGEMENT UPDATE

By Ken Maley

The implementation of the 2008 HortScience tree management plan commissioned by Friends of Washington Square began in January with the long overdue pruning of the stand of Italian stone pines along Stockton Street. One pine that was determined to be vulnerable to failure, causing a potential safety hazard was removed.

It is hoped the pruning will not only extend the life span of these pines, but also reduce the likelihood of future limb failure. Replacement species for the lost pine are being explored with the Friends' arborist, landscape architect, Friends of the Urban Forest and the Recreation & Park Department staff.

The next phase of the tree management plan will be the removal and replacement of several small unhealthy trees in the square. In February, the Recreation & Park Department will plant seven replacement trees.

The department and Friends of Washington Square, will co-host a planting dedication during Chinese New Year celebrations (between Feb. 3 and Feb. 20). Check www.friendsofwashingtonsquare.com for the event date and details.

Friends and Rec & Park are dedicated to following general design concepts for the square's trees as formalized in the 1957 planting plan created by landscape architect Doug Baylis.

Friends of Washington Square received a tree-planting grant from California ReLeaf to help fund replacement trees and to support community outreach and education regarding the trees in the historic landmark square. Rec & Park has provided matching support for the removals and replacements. Friends of the Urban Forest continues to donate its expertise, assisting the Friends in locating and designating replacement trees.



*continued from
page 29*

PARKS, TREES & BIRDS REPORT

stone pine, or a stone pine, plus several deodar cedars.

Because the loss of this lovely old tree leaves such a huge hole, several evergreens will probably be needed as replacements, and the bigger the better, so we won't have to wait 50 years to feel shaded by such lofty magnificence. If you are willing and able, please consider a tax-deductible gift to the Northeast San Francisco

Conservancy, 470 Columbus Ave., Suite 211, S.F., CA 94133, earmarked for "Washington Square large tree replacements." If your gift is substantial, you might even get recognition in the park! (This is not, however, for me to decide.) Our tree canopy not only provides needed habitat for birds, but shade, views, peace and contentment for the rest of us.



Good Breakfast! *continued from page 18*

Christine. Their presentation is beautiful — uniform thin cakes topped with fresh fruit, additional fruit on the side and dusted with powdered sugar. She uses "secret" flour, but confesses the recipe is her Danish grandmother's.

A darling children's picture menu shows all the things for kids to choose from, even if they can't read

and it includes a picture of a Mickey Mouse pancake. So, the BSG is an excellent choice for a family.

When I asked Christine to tell me about herself, she smiled and said, "Local girl makes good." I am so glad I found this treasure and now I am sharing my secret.



result in excessive taxpayers' subsidies or unnecessary giveaways of public land.

- Celebrated the groundbreaking for the new Exploratorium at piers 15 and 17 while continuing to work to ensure that the project addresses its significant new traffic, transit and parking impacts. Many questions remain unanswered, but we are hopeful that they will be resolved before the anticipated Exploratorium opening in the summer of 2013.
- Monitored the progress of the proposed new cruise ship terminal at Pier 27. The port has begun to move forward with plans to knock down the Pier 27 shed and replace it with an entirely new structure.
- Started discussions with the port and the Bay Conservation and Development Commission about amending the San Francisco Waterfront Special

Area Plan. The port is interested in revising the special area plan to accommodate proposed new development projects. THD is working to ensure that the creation of open space and waterfront parks are a priority in any amendments to the plan and that the port begins a long-overdue and legally required updating of the S.F. Waterfront Land-Use Plan.

- Participated in the formulation of a community-based plan for the northern waterfront seawall lots. The "Northeast Waterfront Community Vision" will serve as a substantive alternative to last year's "Northeast Embarcadero Study" by the S.F. Planning Department, which ignored community concerns and now sits on a shelf, gathering dust.



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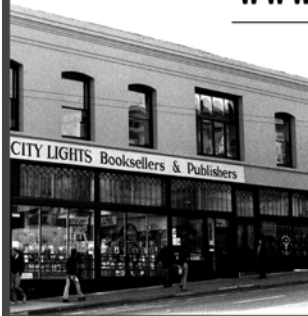
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ART & CULTURE REPORT

by Julie Jaycox, Chair

For those of you who missed out the first time, Mark Bittner, local storyteller and author, will again regale us with juicy details of Bohemian life in North Beach over the years. “The Wild Poets of Telegraph Hill,” Tuesday evening, March 22, at Canessa Gallery. Doors open at 6 p.m., program begins at 6:30. \$10 at the door—

limited number of seats—reservations strongly suggested. Checks to PO Box 330159, S.F., CA 94133 for a guaranteed space. Bring your own tales of living on the creative side to share with the other guests. Hope you can join us!



FIRST FRIDAY IN NORTH BEACH

by Ethel Jimenez, Gallery Director, Gallery 28

North Beach art galleries host an open house with extended hours the “First Friday” of the month. Each gallery offers its own unique venue. Visitors enjoy refreshments, music, poetry and North Beach hospitality in one of San Francisco’s most exciting neighborhoods.

Gallery owners have come together with a goal of making North Beach a destination for the visual arts. The Mission, the Tenderloin and Union Square are recognized as destinations for the arts. North Beach is known for its writers and poets. We want

tourists and residents alike to think of North Beach when they are looking for galleries to visit.

The idea for First Friday evolved from a meeting with District 3 Supervisor David Chiu, who is also president of the Board of Supervisors. There has been much publicity about the city’s efforts to create an art district on Mid-Market Street as a way to rejuvenate that section of the city. Gallery owners in North Beach approached Chiu with the question, “What is available for North Beach?” We are quietly striving to create venues for artists to exhibit their work. How can we partner with the city to increase traffic and increase business?

Over the past year, a number of galleries have opened in North Beach: Aversano Galleria, Arata Fine Art Gallery, Buon Gusto Gallery, Focus Gallery, Craig Fonarow Photography, Gallery 28 and Modern Eden. They join the established Live Worms Gallery, Macchiarini Creative Design and Canessa Gallery. The galleries offer an eclectic mix of art in all disciplines showcasing both established and emerging artists.

The gallery owners are artists themselves and have diverse backgrounds such as airline pilot, public relations manager, insurance

continued on next page

NORTH BEACH FIRST FRIDAYS GALLERY NETWORK

Join us every First Friday of the month at each of the following North Beach Galleries hosts extended hours until 8PM. Each gallery offers its own unique venue, Refreshments, Music, Poetry, and North Beach Hospitality.

- Arata Fine Art Gallery, 450 Columbus Ave. 415-544-9943 www.ArataFineArtGallery.com
- A. Aversano Galleria, 850 Greenwich Street. 415-400-5072 www.aaversano.com
- Buon Gusto Gallery, 535 Green Street 415-956-0279 www.BuonGustoGallery.com
- Canessa Gallery, 708 Montgomery Street 415-296-9029 www.canessa.org
- Craig Fonarow Photography, 527 Columbus Ave. 415-800-8484 www.fonarow.com
- Focus Gallery, 1534 Grant Avenue 415-706-0898 www.FocusGallerySF.org
- Gallery 28, 1228 Grant Avenue 415-433-1228 www.Gallery-28.com
- Live Worms Gallery, 1345 Grant Avenue 415-307-1222 www.KBrownArts.com
- Macchiarini Creative Design, 1544 Grant Avenue 415-982-2229 www.macrealtivedesign.com
- Modern Eden, 403 Francisco Street 415-956-3303 www.ModernEden.com
- Sweeties, 475 Francisco Street (415) 433-2343

More Than Italian! *continued from page 26*

INDIAN

- Naan-N-Curry
533 Jackson St. (at Columbus)

ITALIAN (out of the ordinary)

- Da Flora - A Venetian Osteria
701 Columbus Ave.
*Completely unique, constantly changing

IRISH

- O'Reilly's Irish Pub & Restaurant
622 Green St.
*Breakfast, fish and chips, corned beef

JAPANESE

- Sushi on North Beach - Katsu
745 Columbus Ave.
*Cherry Blossom roll, grilled mackerel

- Curly's Coffee Shop
1624 Powell St.
*Grilled mackerel, Donburi bowls

- Sushi Hunter
1701 Powell St.

MEXICAN

- Don Pisto's
510 Union St.
*Tortilla soup, fish tacos
- Rico's Fine Mexican Restaurant
943 Columbus Ave.

- Taqueria Zorro
308 Columbus Ave.

NEW ORLEANS

- Yats' New Orleans Original Po Boys
1609 Powell St.

PERSIAN

- Maykadeh Persian Cuisine
470 Green St.
*The bread, Kashke Bademjan, Khoreshht Fesenjoon

THAI

- Tuk Tuk Thai Cafe
659 Union St.
*Green chicken curry, crab fried rice

- King of Thai Noodle House
1268 Grant Ave.
*Pad Kee Mao, duck fried rice

VEGAN

- The Loving Hut
1365 Stockton St.
*Pho, claypot rice

VIETNAMESE

- Vietnam Restaurant
620 Broadway
*Imperial rolls, pho

First Fridays *continued from page 33*

broker and musician. They exhibit their work as well as the work of other artists.

First Friday in North Beach has been very well received by the public. Gallery goers walk around

with a list of venues or check their Smart phones for gallery locations. The resulting traffic can only benefit other local businesses.



THD EVENTS



Termeh Yeghiazarian studies Monaco photos at THD Telegraph Hill History display at the Old Mint. THD participated in this event sponsored by the San Francisco Museum and Historical Society on February 12-13.



At Cafe Maria, Pat Callahan applauds Supervisor David Chiu's America Cup Presentation at THD February 7 dinner.

Al's attire

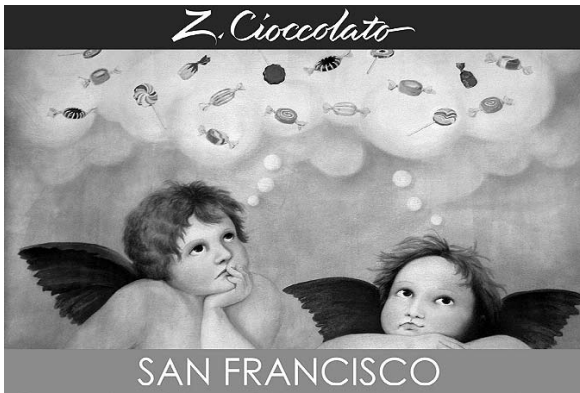


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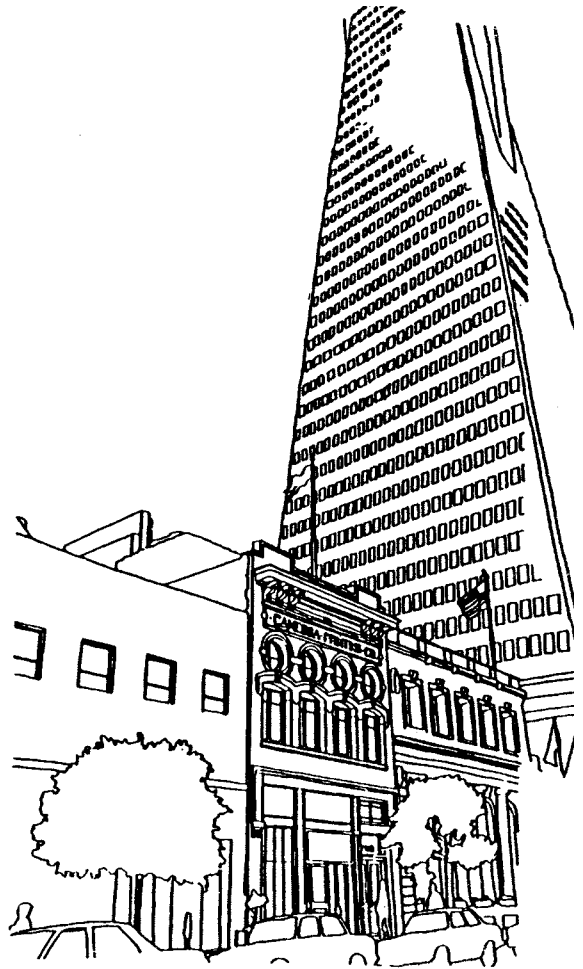
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THD BOARD MOTIONS FOR THE MONTHS OF NOVEMBER, DECEMBER 2010 AND JANUARY 2011

The board passed no motions in November, December or January.



FRIENDS OF WASHINGTON SQUARE

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quick discussion of this “era of unrealized projects” fails to make clear to readers that it was largely the organized, informed and active participation of neighbors and concerned citizens in the evolution of the waterfront that prevented most of these bad ideas from becoming reality. A recent example is the major role that neighborhood groups such as THD, in coalition with local businesses and environmental organizations, played just a few years ago in preventing the Mills Corp.’s proposed massive mall and office complex from taking over piers 27, 29 and 31.

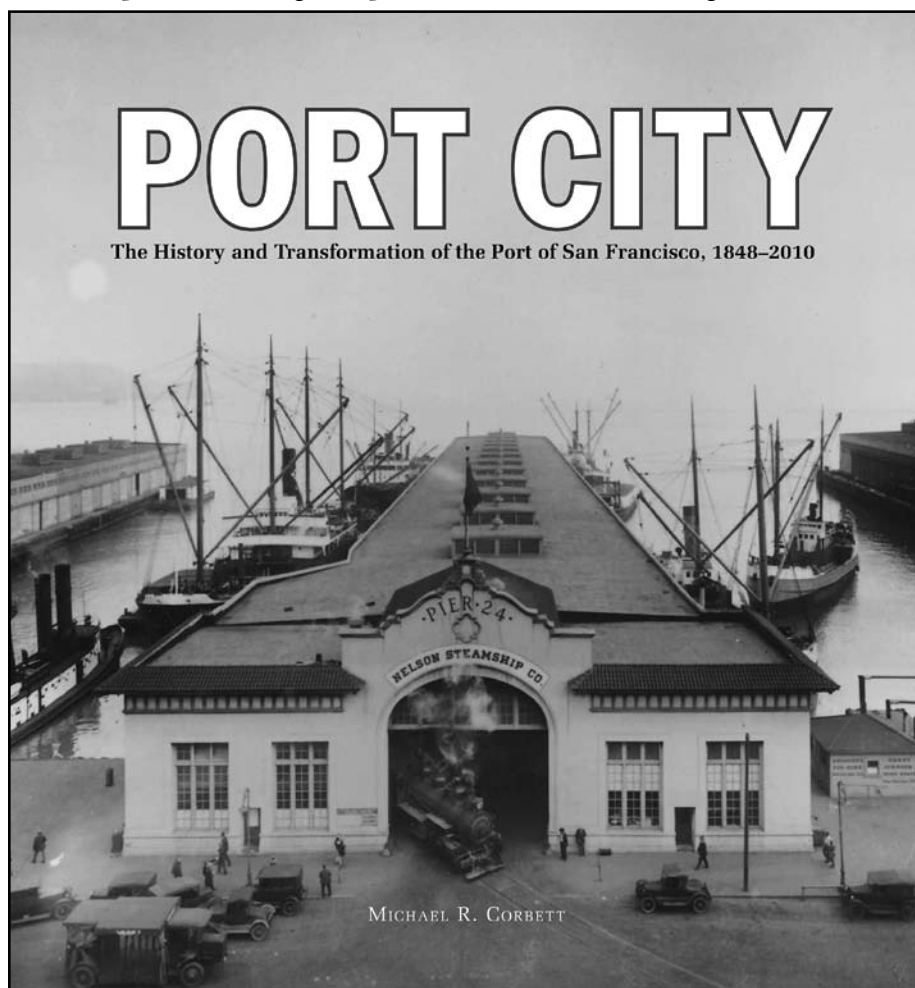
Because of that effort, not only did the port avoid giving precious waterfront development rights to a mall company that soon thereafter went bankrupt, but those very same piers are now instead available for exciting, water-oriented projects such as a new cruise ship terminal, a waterfront park and facilities to allow the public to view the America’s Cup race in 2013.

Perhaps that is the biggest lesson of “*Port City*.” San Francisco’s waterfront has a rich history worth knowing and understanding and a treasure trove of

physical resources worth respecting and preserving, but the most precious of our waterfront’s assets is the people who value it enough to fight to protect it. Reading “*Port City*” is a terrific way for those who love San Francisco’s waterfront to understand exactly what they are saving.

Jon Golinger is a member of the THD Board and co-chair of the Waterfront Committee.

Copies of “*Port City*” are available for sale at Book Passage in the Ferry Building, at William Stout Architectural Books and on the web at www.sfheritage.org/port-city





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THD COMMITTEES NEED YOU

You can make a difference! Join one of THD's committees, meet and work with your fellow Hill Dwellers to improve life on the Hill.

STANDING COMMITTEES

PARKING AND TRANSPORTATION. Promotes efforts to ease congestion, optimize white zones, upgrade public transportation. Works with Department of Parking and Traffic.

PLANNING AND ZONING. Nancy Shanahan, 986-7094, Mary Lipian, 391-5652. Monitors and reviews proposed development projects for consistency with applicable City ordinances. Works with Planning Department staff and represents THD before the Historic Preservation Commission, Planning Commission, Zoning Administrator and other regulating bodies to protect historic resources and maintain neighborhood character. Assists members to learn more about and participate in planning and zoning issues.

SEMAPHORE. Editor, Art Peterson 956-7817; artpeterson@nwp.org. The editor and staff produce a quarterly magazine for THD members.

PROGRAM. Arranges social events, including quarterly membership meetings and get-acquainted social functions.

BUDGET. David Smolen, treasurer@thd.org. As prescribed in Bylaws for Treasurer.

MEMBERSHIP. Chris Stockton, membership@thd.org. As prescribed in Bylaws for Financial Secretary.

ARCHIVIST: Rozell Overmire, rozell@ureach.com

SPECIAL COMMITTEES AND PROJECTS

PARKS, TREES, AND BIRDS. Judy Irving, chair. Information and projects concerning local parks, green spaces and street trees.

THD WEB SITE. Webmaster, Al Fontes; webmaster@thd.org. Shared information about meetings, local concerns and events.

ART AND CULTURE. Julie Jaycox, chair. Organizes events and projects that celebrate the art and humanities of our neighborhood.

LIAISONS WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

COALITION FOR SAN FRANCISCO NEIGHBORHOODS. Representative, Gerry Crowley, 781-4201; gerrycrowley@aol.com. City-wide organization interacts with other neighborhoods to discuss common problems.

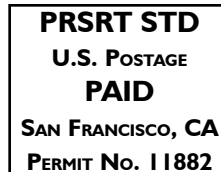
NORTH BEACH NEIGHBORHOOD COALITION. Representative, Gerry Crowley, 781-4201; gerrycrowley@aol.com. Tel-Hi-sponsored group of residents, merchants and government agencies working together to address neighborhood issues.

N.E.R.T. Energizes members to take emergency disaster response training program sponsored by the City.

WEB SITE = www.thd.org

Whether you want to catch up on THD's Oral Histories, see what the THD is up to, or submit old photos of the Hill, www.thd.org is the place to go. Use the Web site to discover or email information about upcoming meetings in the neighborhood and at City agencies, and ideas and concerns you want the rest of us to know about between *Semaphores*.

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TELEGRAPH HILL DWELLERS

Schedules of Committee Meetings

PLANNING & ZONING: Last Thursdays. Call for time and location. 986-7070, 563-3494, 391-5652.

Look to the THD website for information on THD events. **Log on to <http://www.thd.org>**

For a Voice in Your Neighborhood Join Telegraph Hill Dwellers.

THD Welcomes the following new members and members who have rejoined—New Members:

Katelin Holloway & Ben Ramirez, Dan Lorimer, Lynnne & Steve Rabinowitsh, Helen Rogers,

Matthew Smolen, Christina & Linda Su, Elaine Turner, **Former Members Who Have Rejoined:**

Lucy Jones, Gary Kray

NEW MEMBER INFORMATION

Sign Up or Sign a Friend Up as a member of Telegraph Hill Dwellers. Complete and mail to THD, PO Box 330159, SF, CA 94133

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